

*Will visit renewable energy and green initiatives around the state this week*

Burlington, VT -- Rep. Peter Welch today joined leaders of Vermont's renewable energy industry to kick-off his statewide energy tour.

On the tour, Welch will meet with many of Vermont's leaders in the renewable energy industry and of the state's many green initiatives.

"Vermont is national leader of renewable energy development and forward-thinking energy initiatives. I hope to continue to take what I see working so well in Vermont to Washington - not only to address the challenge of global warming, but help Vermont continue to thrive in a new high-tech, pro-growth, renewable energy economy," said Welch.

Welch also announced today he is a co-sponsor of H.R. 550, Securing America's Energy Independence Act of 2007. This legislation extends tax credits for manufacturing, business expansion and residential use of solar energy, fuel cell, and energy efficient expenditures.

The kick-off event was held at Draker SolarDesign in Burlington's Old North End, a leading supplier of performance monitoring equipment for renewable energy projects. Draker's web-enabled monitoring solutions continuously track system performance to help maximize the energy production of installations such as large solar power plants.

"As a small Vermont company focused on improving renewable energy generation and awareness of its benefits, we appreciate Congressman Welch's priority on sustainable forms of energy and his support for growing Vermont companies," said A.J. Rossman, their founder and CTO.

In addition to Draker SolarDesign, Welch will also visit Mt. Abraham High school to hear about their energy initiatives, Middlebury College's facilities building, National Life (member of the US Green Building Council), The Harman Pellet Stove Company, Vermont Technical College's Sustainable Design and Technology Program, and Radiantec's energy efficient heating systems.

In Congress, Welch has championed legislation to combat global warming, reverse tax cuts for oil companies to fund renewable energy development, and made his congressional office carbon neutral.

Welch is also an original co-sponsor of the PROGRESS Act, legislation that will create a National Energy Security Commission to develop energy security and independence goals; establish a New Manhattan Center for High Efficiency Vehicles to focus national public and private vehicle technology and alternative fuels R&D activities; and promote rural rail infrastructure, public transit expansion, and the use of alternative fuels.